

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SS-07 NSC-06 AID-01 /028 W
-----022733 121756Z /41

R 121546Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3748
INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 3273

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, SHUM, NU
SUBJECT: CODEL WILSON - WRAPUP

REF: MANAGUA 3243

SUMMARY: CONGRESSMEN WILSON AND O'BRIEN AND STAFFFER POWERS MET DURING JULY 7-8 VISIT WITH EMBOFFS, PRESIDENT SOMOZA, ARCHBISHOP, PAPAL NUNCION, CAPUCHIN PRIEST, PJCHAMORRO, OTHER OPPOSITIONISTS, WIDE SPECTRUM OF BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS AND GAVE PRESS CONFERENCE. THEY RECEIVED CONSISTENT INFORMATION THERE HAS BEEN A RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. CODEL SCHEDULE BEGAN THURS A.M. WITH CONGRESSMEN WEARY FOLLOWING 0330 WAKEUP IN PANAMA. EMB BRIEFING WAS CANCELLED TO ALLOW THEM BRIEF REST. CHARGE HAD TRUNCATED MEETING WITH CODEL TO BRIEF THEM ON LOCAL SITUATION AND WHAT TO EXPECT AT PRESIDENT SOMOZA'S LUNCH. AT 1200 ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFF, THEY CALLED ON PRESIDENTS OF TWO HOUSES OF CONGRESS, THEN PROCEEDED TO SOMOZA'S RESIDENT WHERE CHARGE WAS INCLUDED IN SMALL, NEARLY THREE HOUR LUNCHEON (SEE REFTEL). AT 1600 EMBOFF ESCORTED THEM FOR FORTY-FIVE MINUTE MEETING WITH ARCHBISHOP AND SUBSEQUENTLY, AT 1700, TO ONE HOUR CONVERSATION
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WITH OPPOSITION LEADER PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO. CODEL MET WITH COUNTRY TEAM FOR DINNER AT CHARGE'S.

2. ON FRIDAY, CODEL TOURED IDB PROJECTS WITH LOCAL REP OF BANK WHO LATER HOSTED LUNCHEON. FOLLOWING LUNCH CODEL HAD ONLY ABOUT ONE HOUR TO TOUR AID PROJECTS PRIOR TO 1700 PRESS CONFERENCE REQUESTED BY CONGRESSMEN. AT RECEPTION AT RESIDENCE CODEL MET REPRESENTATIVE

SPECTRUM OF SENIOR GON, PRIVATE SECTOR, OPPOSITION POLITICIANS PLUS PAPAL NUNCIO AND CAPUCHIN PRIEST PATRICK FORTAN. O'BRIEN AND POWERS DEPARTED SATURDAY A.M. AND WILSON THE FOLLOWING A.M. AFTER RESTING SATURDAY AND ATTENDING DINNER HOSTED BY SOMOZA WHICH WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY REP JOHN MURPHY WHO WAS HERE ON PRIVATE VISIT.

3. CONGRESSIONAL COURTESY CALL. VISIT TO PRES OF DEPUTIES CORNELIO HUECK AND PRES OF SENATE PABLO RENER WAS LARGELY PROTOCOLARY. HOWEVER, HUECK IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONING STATED PERSONAL VIEW U.S. WOULD BE MISTAKEN TO TURN CANAL OVER TO PANAMA. HE ARGUED CANAL COULD FALL INTO HANDS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY. WILSON STATED HIS SUPPORT FOR NEW CANAL TREATY BUT PREOCCUPATION FOR ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES.

4. SOMOZA LUNCHEON IS DESCRIBED REFTEL. WILSON REPORTED THAT IN FEW MINUTES OF PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH SOMOZA SAT NIGHT, LATTER REASSURED WILSON TO EFFECT HE WOULD NOT EMBARRASS HIS FRIENDS. WILSON TOOK THIS TO BE REASSURANCE RE LIFTING MARTIAL LAW AT AN EARLY DATE.

5. ARCHBISHOP. CODEL ASKED ARCHBISHOP HIS VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. HE SAID FROM REPORTS REACHING HIM THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN DROP OFF IN INCIDENTS RECENTLY. HE KNEW OF NO RECENT KILLINGS, DISAPPEARANCES, TORTURE OR OTHER ABUSES. HOWEVER, HE WENT ON TO QUALIFY HIS RESPONSE BY INDICATING IT WAS REALLY CAPUCHINS, NOT HE, WHO RECEIVED THESE REPORTS FROM EASTERN (ZELAYA) AREA IN WHICH

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THEY WORK. HE ALSO REFERRED TO DIFFICULTY KNOWING WHAT WAS HAPPENING BECAUSE OF CENSORSHIP. HE ALSO CLARIFIED PASTORAL LETTER AS NOT DIRECTED EXCLUSIVELY AT GON BUT RATHER TO CONDEMN VIOLATIONS "FROM ABOVE OR FROM BELOW" AND TO CAUSE VIOLATORS TO REFLECT ON THEIR ACTIONS AND REPENT.

6. PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO DESCRIBED HISTORY OF REPRESSIVE GOT AND VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND WHILE HE ACKNOWLEDGED THERE WERE SIGNS SITUATION HAS RECENTLY IMPROVED EXPLAINED THE PHENOMENON AS ABILITY OF DICTORSHIP TO ADJUST REPRESSION AS CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRED. ASKED IF SOMOZA WOULD WIN FREE AND HONEST ELECTIONS, CHAMORRO SAID NO. ASKED IF FREE AND HONEST ELECTIONS WERE POSSIBLE IN NICARAGUA, CHAMORRO REFERRED TO ABSENCE OF FREE ELECTIONS IN SPAIN AND DOM REP UNTIL AFTER FRANCO AND TRUJILLO RESPECTIVELY HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM SCENE. WILSON AND O'BRIEN EXPLAINED THEIR ROLE IN REMOVING EXCLUSION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR NICARAGUA IN ORDER TO GIVE PRES. CARTER FLEXIBILITY TO ADMINISTER HIS FOREIGN POLICY. CHAMORRO SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS POSITION AND THOUGHT THERE WAS LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CUT OFF AND EXECUTIVE DISCRETION IF LATTER POLICY WERE ADMINISTERED WISELY.

7. DURING DINNER MEETING WITH CT, CODEL SUGGESTED INFORMAL DIALOGUE

RE CONGRESSIONAL PERCEPTIONS AND THEIR OBSERVATIONS ON TRIP AND ALSO ANSWERED QUESTIONS IN RELAXED, CANDID EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND OTHER CODELS BE ENCOURAGED TO ENGAGE IN SIMILAR EXCHANGES DURING THEIR VISITS.

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SS-07 NSC-06 AID-01 /028 W
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R 121546Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3749
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
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8. ON FRIDAY DURING IDB TOUR WITHOUT EMBOFFS PRESENT CODEL SAW RICE MILLING OPERATION, LOW COST HOUSING, AND LUMBER MILL. TRUNCATED AID TOUR INCLUDED LAS AMERICAS HOUSING AND OTHER RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS. AT PRESS CONFERENCE WILSON AND O'BRIEN DESCRIBED THEIR IMPRESSION GON WAS DOING EXCELLENT JOB IN PROGRAMS BACKED BY IDB AND AID. SPECIFICALLY WILSON THEY SAID IN HOUSING, MORE NICARAGUANS WERE GETTING MORE SPACE AT LESS COST THAN THEY HAD SEEN IN PANAMA, COSTA RICA OR GUATEMALA (WHICH WILSON HAD PREVIOUSLY VISITED. RE THE EMB PRESS RELEASE ON THE HOUSE VOTE, WILSON SAID THERE WAS NO INCONGRUENCE BETWEEN THE HOUSE DECISION AND THE EMBASSY PRESS STATEMENT. HE AND O'BRIEN DECIDED TO USE THE RECESS TO BETTER INFORM THEMSELVES ON THE REAL SITUATION. WILSON ADDED HE WAS SURE THEY NOW KNEW NICARAGUA MUCH BETTER THAN MR. KOCH.

9. SOMOZA FAMILY-OWNED NOVEDADES COVERED ACCURATELY THEIR STATEMENTS EXCEPT FOR SUGGESTING GIST OF THEIR REMARKS MEANT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE RESPECTED IN NICARAGUA AND LINKING THEIR CONCLUSION TO MEETINGS WITH SOMOZA, ARCHBISHOP, AND CHAMORRO. CHAMORRO WAS VERY UPSET AND SO ADVISED EMBASSY AFTERWARD. (CHAMORRO'S LA PRENSA SENT NO ONE, UNEXPLAINEDLY, TO PRESS CONFERENCE). WILSON TENTATIVELY AGREED TO WRITE CHAMORRO FROM WASHINGTON TO ASSUAGE HIM.

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10. AT RECEPTION CODEL MET CONSERVATIVE PARTY REPRESENTATIVES, SEVERAL CABINET OFFICERS, AMERICAN AND NICARAGUAN BUSINESSMEN, PAPAL NUNCIO AND CAPUCHIN PRIEST, PATRICK FORTAN. FATHER PAT CONFIRMED PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ROP OFF IN ALLEGATIONS OF NEW HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THEIR EAST COAST AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE HE SAID US HAS IMAGE PROBLEM WHEN REPRESSIVE GN USES US WEAPONS AND SUPPLIES. NUNCIO DESCRIBED DESIRE OF CHURCH TO AVOID ALLOWING ITSELF TO BE USED FOR POLITICAL PRESSURE. IT WAS NOT CHURCH'S DESIRE, SAID NUNCIOO, TO BECOME THE INSTRUMENT WHICH WOULD CAUSE USG TO TAKE ACTION ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO GON. WILSON WAS EXTREMELY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED PERSONALLY WITH PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO AND CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADER EDUARDO CHAMORRO.

11. CONCLUSIONS. BOTH REPS INDICATED THEIR VISIT REINFORCED THEIR BELIEF THEY HAD ACTED CORRECTLY IN TURNING AROUND NICARAGUAN EXCLUSION. THEY FOUND GENERAL CONCENSUS FROM ALL CONTACTS HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HAS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED RECENTLY. THEY SEEMED TO AGREE LIFTING OF STATE OF SEIGE WOULD ALSO BE NECESSARY TO OVERCOME CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO RENEWED MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND SO INDICATED TO SOMOZA. EMB ONLY CONCERN IS PRESS CONFERENCE COVERAGE INDICATED THEY LEFT IMPRESSION THAT ALL IS OK IN NICARAGUA WHICH GIVES A DIFFERENT SIGNAL THAN WE HAVE BEEN MAKING, I.E., THAT FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION ARE NEEDED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, POLICIES, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, CODELS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, US CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MANAGU03273
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
From: MANAGUA
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Line Count: 200
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Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MANAGUA 3243
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1890841
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CODEL WILSON - WRAPUP
TAGS: EAID, SHUM, NU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ba0ce76c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009